

285. Slavery in the classical states. Slavery came to the two great classical states from the antecedent facts of savage and barbaric life. When Aristotle came to study slavery he could not find a time when it was not. We have seen how it had become one of the leading institutions of uncivilized society, and how it had been developed in different forms and degrees. The two great classical states, more especially Rome, built their power on slavery. Both states pursued their interests with little care for the pain they might inflict on others, or the cost in the happiness of others. The Roman state began by subjugating its nearest neighbors. It used its war captives as slaves, increased its power, conquered more, and repeated the process until it used up all the known world. The Phoenicians were merchants, who kidnapped men, women, and children, if they found opportunity, and sold them into slavery far from home. The Ionians, who grew rich by commerce, bought slaves and organized states in which slaves did all the productive work. In both Greece and Rome productive work came to be despised. One is amazed to find how easily any one who went on a journey might fall into slavery, or how recklessly the democracy of one city voted to sell the people of a defeated city into slavery, yet how unhesitatingly everybody accepted and repeated the current opinions about the baseness of slave character. Homer says that a slave has only half the soul of a man.¹ The love stories in the *Scriptores Erotici* very often contain an incident of kidnapping. The story of Eumseus must have been that of many a slave.² It is also only rarely and very incidentally that the classical writers show any pity for slaves, although they often speak of the sadness

of slavery.³ If
 any man, especially a merchant, who went on a
 journey incurred
 a great risk of slavery, why was not slavery a
 familiar danger of
 every man, and therefore a matter for pity and
 sympathy? In the
 great tragedies the woes of slavery, especially the
 contrasts for
 princes and princesses, heroes and heroines, are
 often presented.
 Polyxena, in Euripides's *Hekuba*, 360, bewails her
 anticipated
 lot as a slave. A fierce master will buy her. She
 will have to

¹ Oē, XVII, 322.

² *Ibid.*, XV, 403.

³ Buchholz, *Homer: Realien*, II, 63.